

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

**POCD STEERING COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 21, 2013 – 6:00 P.M.**

**COMMUNITY MEETING #2
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1**

GROTON PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL COASTAL PROGRAM UPDATES

I. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Regular members present: Frink, Pritchard, Rafferty, Scott, Sherrard,
Sutherland, Williams

Absent: Cerf, Kane, Marquardt, Munn, Smith

Staff present: Oefinger, Murphy, Jones, Norris

II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a. Contents of the Plan and Role of Planning Commission

Consulting team provided an overview of the POCD and MCP process, including the legal and planning background of the process, and areas that the planning process has examined.

Consultants also provided an overview of the survey distributed to Groton residents, including preliminary results on priorities held by survey respondents.

Following open house session to discuss issues including Land Use, Build-out, MCP, Energy and Sustainability, Economic Development, Community Facilities, and Parks and Recreation, the group reconvened to discuss key concerns and takeaways.

III. DISCUSSION TOPICS

a. Municipal Coastal Program

Blocked culverts at Birch Plain Creek and railroad—need for riprap, stones, or rocks?

Need to clearly explain sea level rise projection and provide information on increase in coastal storms.

Desire to relate Sea Level Rise projections and impacts to tax and property values.

Groton Long Point's future in question: what sorts of uses (residential vs. non-residential, recreational, marshland) will be appropriate under different scenarios?

Questions about the design horizons of infrastructure such as Groton Long Point bridge and sewer pumping stations

b. Build-Out

For each land use category, produce tax revenue calculations and net revenues.

Look into 'distressed communities' designation.

Need for info on per capita cost of government and schools over time.
Line up commercial/ industrial vacant land with existing sewer and water service.

Information needed: is Birch Plain Golf Course for sale?

Request for 3D model of build-out, especially in rural residential zones.

c. Energy & Sustainability

Broad interest in learning more about the prospects for green energy projects: what options exist and what might be feasible?

Perceived need to establish clear goals and better metrics for sustainability outcomes.

Further thinking is needed to determine costs and paybacks of different investments in energy and sustainability.

Priorities for new developments include increasing pervious surfaces (e.g. permeable pavement), reducing stormwater runoff, and minimizing clear-cutting and topsoil removal.

Need to investigate improvements to municipal lighting, such as LEDs, and ensure that existing infrastructure (e.g. auto switches) is working properly
Wastewater treatment plant consumes close to half of municipal energy—can this be reduced?

d. Economic Development

Interest exists in taking advantage of key location and character assets of Groton to pursue maritime and ecologically oriented tourism opportunities.

- Opportunities include Thames Heritage Park and potential for boating (rentals or tours) on the Thames.
- A cooperative arts initiative may also fit into this approach.

Gas and utility expansions can open up development opportunities; pursuing this at Flanders road is still perceived as a priority.

Developing a comprehensive inventory of commercial and industrial property, as well as a vacant property listing, can facilitate identification of development opportunities.

It may be worthwhile to investigate establishing an airport development zone.

Coordination is needed to identify and pursue high-return economic development initiatives, as well as pursuing feasible near-term projects.

Interest in streamlining of development process, but concern that this should not reduce the land use commission's power.

e. Community Facilities and Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Municipally managed open space should not include the landfill unless it is made into grassland habitat or a similar use.

Good recreational facilities seen as an economic development tool.

Better fields in the area of the high school and Merritt Property and turf field to replace HS football field allowing year round use of asset.

Interest in development of community center, perhaps near middle school, with swimming pool or aquatic center.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:43 p.m. made by Sherrard, seconded by Smith, so voted unanimously.

Jeff Pritchard, Secretary
Steering Committee

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